



**NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU**  
1636 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON DC 20301-1636

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30 March 2009

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE ADJUTANTS GENERAL OF ALL STATES, PUERTO RICO, THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS, GUAM AND THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**SUBJECT: Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) – April 2009**

1. National Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) is observed each year during April to raise public awareness of sexual violence and to teach sexual assault prevention techniques. This year marks the National Guard's fourth observance of SAAM. This month and each month of the year offer us the opportunity to further our joint Army and Air National Guard mission to prevent sexual assault and to respond compassionately when it does occur.
2. The 2009 SAAM theme across the Department of Defense is **"MY STRENGTH IS FOR DEFENDING"**. The military's mission not only involves national defense, but also the security of those service members who voluntarily risk their lives in the defense of our country. To prevent this crime, every National Guard member must adhere to our core values. All leaders in the National Guard should implement sexual assault prevention through bystander intervention. Leaders should ensure that intervention methods are taught by trained Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) and Victim Advocates (VAs). All service members must learn to safely intervene when they identify behaviors that may lead to sexual assault.
3. Many sexual assaults reported in the National Guard involve alcohol. Alcohol is often the primary weapon that incapacitates both male and female victims. All commanders must set the tone for prevention of alcohol facilitated sexual assault through using bystander intervention as the method to protect our battle buddies and wingmen.
4. Sexual assault degrades mission readiness and is fundamentally at odds with our values. It is the responsibility of all men and women in uniform to treat their fellow National Guard Soldiers and Airmen with dignity and respect.

  
CRAIG R. MCKINLEY  
General, USAF  
Chief, National Guard Bureau